

A
VISITATION

OF

*Love, Peace, and Good Will, from the
Spirit of the Lord:*

SENT

*Unto the whole Flock of God, now in this
their day of Tryal and hour of Temptation,
for the Refreshing, Strengthening,
Comforting, and Building of them up in their most Precious
Holy, Faith, that they may be Encouraged to hold fast the Pro-
fession thereof through all Tryals and Sufferings, unto the
End, That the Crown Immortal they may come to Receive.*

Being two Epistles; The one from *F. H.*
And the other from *A. P.*

*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, For behold the Devil
shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, &c. Be thou
faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life, Rev. 2.10.*

London, Printed in the Year 1664.

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NOTES

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the subject.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the special principles of the subject.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the practical applications of the subject.

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the historical development of the subject.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the future prospects of the subject.

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the conclusions of the paper.

A Visitation of Love, Peace, and Goodwill from the Spirit of the Lord; Sent unto the whole Flock of God, now in this their day of Tryal, and hour of Temptation, &c.

Dear Friends and Brethren, who have been called to believe by the Holy Calling of the Lord unto Sanctification and Holiness, that ye might inherit the Promises of God, and that your souls might live in the land of the living, and partake of his goodness; that you might admire him, and praise his name for ever: And seeing the Lord out of his rich Love and Mercy hath visited you, who sometime sate in the Region of the shadow of death, and were cast out of his presence in the time of Unbelief, seeing he hath caused his Miraculous Light to shine upon you, in his gracious Visitation of you; and hath given you to believe in his name, prize his love unto you: and let not his gracious Benefits slip out of your mindes, least your hearts be filled with other things that will corrupt your hearts, and make you an unmeet habitation for the Lord to dwell in and among. Dear friends hear my Brotherly Admonition and Exhortation, for the Lord moved in my heart to write unto you; and in the bowels of his kind and tender Love, and motion of his Heavenly Spirit, to stir up your pure Minds and Consciences unto stedfastnes in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so much the more that you all be watchful, seeing the times be perillous, for now the Adversary goes about Roaring and Ravening, on the right hand and on the left, to destroy and devour that which God hath brought forth in you, that so he might re-gain you too under his power and government; and that ye might revolt from the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, that stands in Power and Righteousness, which is come and hath been of a truth manifest in great glory; and this is an hour the power of darkness is let loose to try the faith of them that dwell upon the earth,

earth, and he is let loose for a season (Blessed are they that hide themselves under the shadow of the Almighty, and under the wings of Christ Jesus, who is given for a Redeemer, a Saviour, and a preserver of men) that the wicked one touch them not; and now the Devil Rages because he knows his Kingdom is but short, and but for a small time is like to stand in many, because a stronger then he that rules in the world is come, and hath began to dispossess the strong man, and bind him, and cast him out; and now he Rages and stirs up all the temptations within and without, and all his Instruments to joyn with him, to make war for him, that he might not Rule who is the Heir of all things, and given for a Leader, and to be the Head of the Body his Church, in which alone he hath right to Rule, because the Lord of the whole earth, ye of Heaven and earth, hath put all power into his hands, to bind and to loose, to bring out of Captivity, and to lead Captivity Captive, that life and Immortality might again inhabit in the sons of men, that truth and Righteousness might sway, that mercy and love might sit on the Throne, that his salvation might take hold on the ends of the earth, and his power made known from Sea to Sea, that all that wait for him, and love his appearance now when he is made manifest, might rejoice in his goodness and life, and may be made glad as *Zebulon* and *Nephthali*, beyond *Jordan*, in the days of old, upon whom sprang up a marvellous light, that the whole earth might be filled with his praise and glory, that hath been filled with darkness, violence, and cruelty, in the time of the Devil and Antichrists Reign, which hath been long and great in the earth: So that the hearts of the sons of men have been corrupted, and they are gone backward from the Lord, and have been degenerated into a strange nature, and hath brought forth evil and corrupt fruit, like that of *Sodom*; and they that do evil are not at all ashamed, neither do they blush, but are become Impudent, through the long custom of evil, and hard and Impenetrable, upon whom the hammer of the Lord must come, and his indignation be poured forth: But you whom God hath called out of this estate into a state of Redemption and purity, by his Son the light of the world, who hath Illuminated the eyes of your minds, Consciences and Understandings, that you might bear witness unto him that is true, a testimony against the world that lies in wickedness, and pleads for it, and lives in it, as though it were the way

To felicity, hold fast your liberty, hold fast your faith, hold fast your
 hope, hold fast your testimony, let none take your Crown, and so
 much the more, as you are compassed with temptations, and the
 times be perrillous so much the more, you had all need to keep near
 the Lord, for now Father would betray the Son, and the Son the Fa-
 ther: the Mother her daughter, and the daughter her Mother, and
 Brother, and Kinsfolks betray one another, and them that exercise
 authority would betray who are not in the power of God, and
 through flattery and threats and fair promises, and frowns, and gifts,
 & rewards, & ease, and liberty, and the glory of the world, and what
 not to lead your hearts away from the Lord, and then glory over
 you, and joyce that your feet should slip and you fall into the mire
 and dirt, and gross abominations, and pollutions of the world, that
 lyes in wickedness, dearly beloved never heed none of these things,
 let not the Philistines put out your eyes, nor damme up your wells,
 for then they would make you grind like *Samson* & you might perish
 in the drought for lack of moisture, and then your dayes would be
 miserable, and your years full of sorrow, for the Lord will perform
 his promise, and keep Covenant with them, that keep covenant
 with him, but if you forsake him in your hearts, in what is made
 manifest, then he will forsake you, and then you are left to
 the mercy of your adversary which will be cruel. Therefore heed
 not the pride, of *Moab* nor the reviling of the children of *Ammion*, for
 they are uncircumcised in heart, and the moath shall eat them up as
 a garment: oh if any draw back from following of the lamb, through
 suffering they will be smitten, and the Lord will have no pleasure
 in them, and what will *Amaleck* say, when Israel turnes their backs
 in the day of Battel, but where is their God, in whom they trusted,
 and he that brought them forth was not able to deliver them to the
 end, oh that such things may never be spoken of now in *Gath*, or
Ashkelon as in the days of old, lest the Sons of the *Philistines* triumph,
 & the Daughters thereof joyce in their wickedness, & this would
 make the hearts of Israel of God to mourn, this is the day of the
 Lambs war indeed in ^{our} age, and a day of battel, though his wea-
 pons and his followers be not Carnal but Spiritual, and there is none
 that goes to war doth intangle himself that hath a purpose to hold
 out, and is resolved to continue with him in his sufferings, but will
 shake off these things that incumber, last he should not obtain the
 victory

victory, and come short of the promise, and the victory, and crown, which all that endure hardship unto the end shall receive; oh dear friends look above all visible things, and stand out of them all, and loose from them, that the enemy do not ensnare you; *What is not this earth the Lords and the subtleties thereof?* and hath he not given the utmost part of the Earth for a possession unto his Son? What was not *Abraham* our Father blessed, when he was faithful and obeyed the voice of the Lord, and went out of his own Country he knew not whether? was not the Lord with him whether ever he went, and his blessing upon him where he sojourned in a strange land; did not God intreat him kindly in *Mesopotamia*, and among the *Hittites*, and was not he loved and feared among his enemies, was not *John* the beloved and faithful Disciple of Christ banished into *Patmos* for the testimony that he held? was not *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego* Children of the Captivity, cast into the furnace, and *Daniel* too among the Lions, for the testimony they held against the common worship of Nations commanded by a Law; did Christ endure the death of the Cross and the contradiction of sinners, and condemned by the most? did not the believing *Hebrews* who were banished, wander in sheep skins and goat skins, in holes, dens, and caves of the Earth for the hope they held, and the Country they looked for? did not *Moses* through faith forsake *Pharaohs* Court and became a Companion of poor brick-makers in captivity, a cloud of witnesses might be brought, even of them who died in the faith and yet were not made partakers of the promises, who many of them saw not what you have seen, nor hear those things that you have heard, nor enjoyed that which God hath made many partakers of; and have we not a great cloud of witnesses in this our own Age, some who have not loved their lives unto the death for the testimony they received, believed, and held fast to the end unto death; hath not many died in prison with hard usage, hath not some been hanged and died a shameful death, and finished their course with Joy and Peace, have not many endured great, hard, and long Imprisonment for years, and are they yet weary; nay, have not many suffered great spoil of their Goods, and have not they a reward seven fold into their bosom. Oh let the consideration of these things dwell upon your hearts, and provoke you unto suffering, and long-suffering with joyfulness, that in the midst of all Tribulations as it abounds

you

you may feel according to the promise of God your joy much more abound to carry you above it; indeed now is the time come, and he that will ~~not~~ manifest himself to be on the Lords side must suffer, and he that will not but turn back into the broad way, and run with the heard of swine in o the sea of common pollution must perish there, and indeed there is no place for halting, if God be God follow him, and if *Baal* be he go after him; and therefore let none draw you aside from that you are perswaded of in your consciences by the Spirit of the Lord, neither to joyn with that you know he disallows, and in the obedience you will have peace and joy; look not at them that draws back, for they go to perdition, but rather after them that continues faithful, that shall receive honour, and glory, immortality and everlasting life, in the fresh heavenly power of God meet together and worship him as at other times, though the decree be gone forth and the more because you have been therein refreshed, and comforted, and edified; and let none perswade you from that innocent duty in worshipping God in his Spirit, and assembling your selves together for the strengthening of one another, for this is the will of God and acceptable in his sight as many of you well know; *watch and pray least you fall into temptation, and into the snare of the wicked one*, the God of heaven and earth establish all your hearts that you may glorifie God in your Generation, and be a sweet and an odorous smell unto him in bonds or liberty, in life or death is the prayer of him who hath besought the Lord, and is determined so to do on all your behalf, till the Lord by his power tread satan under your feet, that you may triumph and rejoyce and sing over all in heavenly rejoycing and praises unto God, and the Lamb that lives for ever, and for evermore Amen.

*From Applebye Goal the
place of my Rest where
my days and hours are
pleasant unto me the
4th. of the 5th. Mo-
neth. 64.*

*Your dear Brother in the Patience and
Suffering of Christ, who abounds
in perfect love to all the faithful
flock of Christ every where.*

Francis Howgill.



A
SALUTATION
OF

*Dear and tender love, springing and arising
from the fountain of light and life revealed
from God, unto all the dear children of
God, who love and beleive in the true light.*

Dear and well beloved friends you whom God in mercy and tender love hath visited with the day-spring from on high opening your understandings: and letting you see the deceits of the subtile serpent, and the empty dead formes and inventions of men, which have been set up in the night of darkness and Apostacy, which have been over people of all sorts in that part of the world called Christendom, since the days of the Apostles of Christ and not onely so, but by the vertue of the same light shining in your hearts, he hath revealed and manifested the great and deep things concerning his kingdom, and the beauty and glorious excellency of his house, and of those things pertaining unto life and peace, the sight whereof hath kindled and inflamed the hearts of many with holy desires after the full enjoyment of that glory, life, and peace, which in the light is set before them, and true breathings and strong cryes hath passed through many to him, who hath power to dispose of this kingdom, crying Lord what shall we do that we may be heires of thy kingdom, and the Lord hath hearkned and heard the cryes of such as have drawn

near unto him in nakedness and humility of heart, and by his light hath shewed them those things which are evil, which they ought to refrain; and also those things which are pure and good, which they ought to embrace, and as many as in the light have received him to them he hath given power, not only to resist the evil in all its appearances, but also to embrace and obey the good in its appearing within. Thus the Lord begun his work even his great work of Reformation in us, making a separation between the precious and the vile, laying the axe unto the very root of the evil tree, and by it cut down sin and iniquity within: which all profession without could never do, and as you and we did sensibly feel and know the Lords power revealed within, making a separation, there the same power did lead and draw us to a separation without from sin and all sinful persons, so that we could not pertake, (nor joyn) with them in any bad thing, nor go with them to the same excess of Riot, and foolish vain pleasure, which wicked men that know not God delight in, and as we were drawn out of the worlds wicked ways, into holiness and Righteousness, to follow Christ our Saviour in the way that he walked in, oh then how did the enemy rage, and appear as a flood to swallow us up, and stirred up his instruments to Scoff, Scorn, Revile, Stone, Beat, and persecute us, and through a great fight of afflictions we passed, through all which the Lord led the faithful and put a stop to the raging sea dividing of it, and brought his children safely thorow. Thus hath it been with us, in all our travells since we were called out of Egypts dark Land, the enemy hath been very busie going about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devoure, which is no new nor strange thing, for from the dayes of righteous *Abel* unto this day and age wherein we now live, the righteous holy people have suffered and been persecuted by the wicked and ungodly, as the Scriptures of truth and other ancient ecclesiastical writings do declare, oh what cruel mockings, stonings and many deep exercises, and great persecutions did gods people Endure in every age and generation, through which the Lord led them, and by his holy power revealed in them did uphold them, and preserve them, and made all things easie unto them, so that they were Conquerors, yea more then Conquerors through the Lord Christ that loved them. And now dear hearts its the same hand

hand and Arm of power that was stretched forth and revealed in them, which preserved them, and gave them dominion and victory, that now is held forth and revealed in us, which is able to preserve, defend and uphold us in the greatest tryalls and exercises which we may meet withal or be exercised with for his namesake And therefore am I moved and stirred up in Gods holy zeal by his own pure Spirit, to admonish you in true brotherly love to hold fast your profession and what ever you have received from God through the son of his love, oh treasure it up in your hearts, that you may have abundance of durable riches, which none can take from you, for now is a day of great tryal, and the devil rages because his time is but short, yea very short, for as sure as God lives he shall be taken and all that joyn with him to uphold his kingdom of pride and oppression, and they all shall be cast into the burning lake that never shall be quenched there to be tormented forever and ever, the day is dawning wherein the Lord will accomplish and fulfil all these good things which he hath promised by his holy Prophets in former times, and in this day pride and oppression, cruelty, and persecution shall have an end, the Lord hath said it, who is able to perform it, and the Righteous shall be delivered from all their heavy yokes and oppressive burdens, and the Land shall be cleansed and swept, and evil-doers shall have no place, but the holy people who have followed the Lamb of God in the Regeneration, who have given up their all into the will of God, and have not loved their lives unto the death, they shall inherit the kingdom, and Christ over all shall rule and Reign, and so the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and this great work shall not be effected and brought to pass by sword, or any weapon of War by the Arm of flesh but onely and alone by the spirit and power of the mighty God the great Jehovah who has all power in his hand, who has power to set up and throw down at his pleasure, who is a consuming fire, and all the proud and those that do wickedly, (though they may say well, and profess high things) they shall be like unto the dried stubble, and shall surely be consumed root and branch. And I know assuredly by the testimony of God in my heart, that the Lord is able even in a moment of time to make all his enemies his footstool, for he who hath wrought mightily

mightily in our hearts by his spirit and power, wounding and bruising the head of the serpent, and destroying the devil and his works in us, as many can truly experience, he is the same unto all that wait upon him, and can work the same work in every individual person in the whole world. Therefore all you dear friends of truth, who have been quickened by the word of life, and raised up unto a lively hope, who have made an open confession and profession of the holy name of the Lord be encouraged, and put on strength even the strength of God whereby you may stand against all the assaults of the devil, and may also be enabled to bear and suffer all things patiently, which for the name of Christ, may be inflicted upon you, be faithful to God in his requirings and do his will, and you shall know more of his mind and doctrine; and as you are faithful to God in the obedience of Righteousness, you cannot be unfaithful to man for obedience to God, in the Light is the ground of all faithfulness unto men, and so herein we stand approved before the Lord, and in due time shall be manifest unto the consciences of all men, though for a time we may be reproached and branded with foul names of heresie, error and sedition, as the holy people formerly were, and though for a time we may suffer, let us bear it with patience without murmuring or contriving, (or without the least desiring) the hurt of those who persecute us, for herein the spirit of christianity will appear, and shew forth itself in us, and the Lord in due time even as the day approaches will wipe away all these reproaches, and scandalous termes and names which are cast on us, and we shall appear as we are clothed in the Lambs innocency, meeknesse, and gentlenesse, and true sincerity of heart, let every dear babe and Lamb of God keep their habitations of innocency, and dwell under the shadow of the wing, the arm of the Lord and there you shall be preserved. And whereas some term us to be a stubborn and rebellious people that is also false, for we cannot rebel against any man, neither King nor any under him, for the ground of rebellion is disobedience to God and rebellion against him by sinful deeds, for whosoever rebels against the light of God in his own heart, will soon rebel against the highest of men if he be provoked therunto & have opportunity, and though in words high things may be pretended, and flattering titles given unto men, its all deceit and iniquity, and in the time

of tryal it will manifest it self. But truth and the sincere lovers of it can call nothing holy, but what is really so, neither can they give the titles of pious, sacred and good to any man, or people, who are not really holy and good, for that were but flattery and deceit which God did ever: (and doth at this day) abhor so let none of these things trouble you, but walk in the light as Gods dear beloved and redeemed people for their stands our union with God and one with another, and mind the drawings of the fathers love which will more and more draw you out of all Carnal fading visible things where no lasting peace is, & bring you home to the true peace and centre of life, where fulness of joy is, and all spiritual blessings to refresh you day by day, & this is the priviledge of Gods suffering people, at this day even their free access unto the throne of grace, and free liberty to eat and drink at the Lords Table, where there is bread of life that nourishes unto eternal life; and where there is living water, that sweetly refreshes the thirsty souls, oh come dear hearts eat and drink abundantly, that you may be filled and abound that so you may communicate unto others, that may be refreshed with you, and you with them in the love of the Lord, And dear friends as it was the saints practice in former times to meet together in the holy name of the Lord to wait upon God, and worship him in spirit and truth, and as it hath been our practice, since we were acquainted with the Lord to meet together likewise to wait upon God, and to declare and speak of those great things which he hath done for us, and wrought in us, accordingly as the good spirit of God doth move in any, and give utterance, so dear friends keep your Meetings in the name of God, for you well know that we have no other end in our Meeting but so serve God, and to turn people from the devil, and the service of sin unto God, that they together with us may glorifie God, and serve him in the new life of righteousness, and by this way and means many have been convinced of the evil of their wayes, and also of the deadnesse and emptinesse of mens invented Customary formes and worships; and so have joynd and sate down with us in stilnesse to wait upon God in spirit, to receive spiritual food and refreshment to their souls, And this hath greatly troubled the people,

people, and Rulers of this Nation, and now they strive to put a stop, and have made a law to hinder us in our Meetings, but in this case knowing it to be our duty to God, and if neglected we should provoke the Lord and kindle his anger against us, we chuse rather to obey the Lord, though we provoke man, and we chuse rather to suffer such punishments as can be inflicted on us by man, being assured that God will be with us and uphold us, and give us peace in our hearts and consciences in our sufferings, which none can take from us, which if either for fear of man, or love to this present world we should neglect, and so provoke the Lord, we know that no man can give us peace, or make an atonement for us; for we have known Gods terrors for sin and disobedience, and have known his righteous judgments revealed, and we know it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who though he have long patience, and waits to be gracious, yet he will not always strive with man, but will suddenly come and render vengeance in flames of fire upon all that knows him not, and that doth not obey the Gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints; therefore continue in his fear and love, and in true and sincere obedience of the Gospel of peace unto the end, even untill all your enemies be conquered; so shall you be Crowned with life as you do overcome; but unlesse there be a Conquest over Sin, Hell, and Death, yea and over that nature which is unwilling to suffer there is no Crown, therefore its said be faithful unto death, and thou shalt have the Crown of life. Dear hearts mind these weighey things, and be faithful, bold, and valiant for the truth, and great shall be your reward. These things was I moved in the spirit of pure love to write unto you by way of Remembrance to stir up your pure minds, that you may go on with boldness and courage in the way of the Lord which he hath called you into, with the tender of my very dear love unto you, wishing and from my very soul desiring and heartily praying that bowels of mercy, true love, peace and patience with all other spiritual blessings, and all things conducing unto life and godliness from God our Father

(35)
ther & Jesus Christ our light, life, & leader may be encreased
and multiplied amongst you, and to him alone even the God
of all our mercies who is Israels Keeper and Protector, and to
the word of his grace in you do I commit and commend you
all resting with you in the patience of Christ.

*Let this be read amongst
friends in the fear of
God, when in his name
they are met together.*

*Your Brother and Companion in tribulation
waiting for the Restoration of all
things into their purity, even as it was
in the beginning before transgression
was, who am a sufferer for the testimony
of Jesus in the common Goal in New-
gate, London this 30th. day of the
5th. Moneth. 1664.*

Alexander Parker.

T H E E N D.